

**Subject: Trespass become criminal**

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**To:** TRAVELLER-NET@JISCMAIL.AC.UK

Hi all

Some bad news for Travellers in Ireland.

The government has just passed a bill that it guillotined through the Dail today. Two amendments were added to the Bill less than 24 hours before its final reading, which have the effect of criminalising a Travelling way of life in Ireland.

The Bill, which has passed all stages in the lower house, had the two amendments inserted at the last minute by the Fainna Fail government with the support of the main opposition party.

The situation for Travellers after the bill comes into effect will be to make parking on public or private property a public order offence. The public Order Act 1994 has been amended to empower the police to order the removal or arrest of any person who occupies a temporary dwelling on any public, or private property, failure to comply with the order will be an offence.

While the act is primarily aimed at Travellers and is direct and in disproportionate response to a couple of incidents of large encampments last summer is also a deliberate election ploy on the part of the Government, A general election is due in May.

The effect of the provision is also much broader as the provision prevents the trespass onto public or private land with any "object" which could cause damage to that land, So Roads and GMO protesters leave your shovels at home.

Traveller Organisations held a protest outside the Dail this morning attended by 400 people, as the inclusion of public order offence into a housing bill is totally inappropriate and has serious consequences for Travellers

There are currently more than 1200 Traveller Families who are camped on public land, throughout the country; on the coming into force of this act they will become criminals.

I hope people on the list would write to the Irish Government protesting at the introduction of this draconian piece of legislation. And highlight the implications for Travellers and the right to protest.

For further information on the bill visit Irish Government site, [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie) "Housing Miscellaneous Bill 2002"

Or the ITM site [www.itmtrav.com](http://www.itmtrav.com)

David

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